United Nations S/2003/1201

Security Council

Distr.: General
23 December 2003

Original: English

Twentieth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL)

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1492 (2003) of 18 July 2003, in which the Council approved my recommendation for adjusting the drawdown plan of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and requested me to report at regular intervals on each phase of the drawdown and on the progress made with respect to the benchmarks that should guide the withdrawal of the Mission. The report describes the progress accomplished in implementing phase 3 of the Mission's withdrawal and provides an assessment of the security situation and implementation of the benchmarks.

II. Implementation of the drawdown plan

2. It may be recalled that under the modified drawdown plan for the military component of UNAMSIL, which was approved by the Security Council in resolution 1492 (2003), phase 3 of UNAMSIL's withdrawal would have to be implemented in four stages. As was indicated in my last report (S/2003/863), dated 5 September 2003, the first stage of that phase was completed in August 2003 with the withdrawal of a Nigerian battalion from Makeni and Kamakwie in Sector Centre, which reduced the Mission's troop strength to 12,311. In the second stage, a Bangladeshi battalion was scheduled to be withdrawn from Sector Centre in November. However, the relocation of that battalion was accelerated because of the requirement to transfer it to Liberia to reinforce the United Nations Mission in Liberia. The battalion was re-deployed to Monrovia in October 2003.

3. The third stage of phase 3 began in December 2003 and is expected to be completed in June 2004. This stage envisages the complete drawdown of the United Nations troops from Sector Centre with the repatriation of the Sector headquarters staff and the remaining Bangladeshi battalion, as well as the Bangladeshi medical unit. A Nepalese battalion currently deployed in Sector Centre will be relocated to Sector West. At the end of this stage, in June 2004, the area currently covered by Sector Centre will be completely under the responsibility of Sierra Leone security agencies, while UNAMSIL's troop strength will be reduced to 10,500 and the Mission's deployment structure will be reconfigured into only two Sectors, East and West. Since this will be the first time that UNAMSIL has handed over security

03-66840 (E) 301203

responsibility for such a large area to Sierra Leone security agencies, it will be important to execute this stage with particular caution. As at 15 December 2003, the Mission's troop strength stood at 11,528.

4. Beyond June 2004, the modified drawdown plan foresees the withdrawal of 5,500 troops from September to October 2004, which would leave the Mission's troop strength at approximately 5,000. The remaining 5,000 troops would be repatriated by the end of December 2004. However, as indicated in my eighteenth report, before the implementation of those last stages begins, it will be essential to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the benchmarks and the progress made in consolidating peace and stability in Sierra Leone, with a view to determining whether further adjustments to the withdrawal plan will be required. To that end, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations — in close consultation with other United Nations stakeholders involved — has been instructed to conduct such an assessment, on the basis of which I would present appropriate recommendations to the Security Council in my March 2004 report.

III. Security situation

5. During the reporting period, the overall political and security situation in Sierra Leone has remained generally stable. UNAMSIL and the Government of Sierra Leone have continued to conduct joint regular evaluations of the security environment within the framework of the National Security Council Coordinating Group, which brings together representatives of Sierra Leone's security sector, UNAMSIL and the International Military Advisory Training Team (IMATT). During the period under review the group held weekly meetings.

6. In assessing the overall security situation, special attention has been paid to areas vacated by UNAMSIL troops, the areas along the border with Liberia, the diamond-mining areas and Freetown and its environs. Since the Mission's drawdown was launched in September 2002, UNAMSIL troops have withdrawn from a number of strategically important areas and handed them over to the Sierra Leone police. However, UNAMSIL military observers, as well as civilian police, civil affairs and human rights officers have continued to maintain a presence in those areas to support and monitor the performance of Sierra Leone security agencies and local administration. Local security committees comprising senior members of the national police, the army and the civil service have been established at the provincial and district levels in order to identify security threats and to coordinate appropriate responses.

7. UNAMSIL continues to work closely with the security committees and conducts frequent joint exercises with the police and the army. The Mission intends to gradually reduce its visibility as the capacity of the local security agencies and the provincial and district security committees increases. To date, the areas vacated by UNAMSIL have remained stable. However, the high unemployment rate among the youth and ex-combatants who have not yet benefited from reintegration programmes represent challenges that have political and security implications. Additionally, the main potential security threat in Sector Centre is the presence of the former Civil Defence Force (CDF), which has maintained its structures in some areas.

8. In addition, an internment camp accommodating elements of the former Armed Forces of Liberia and of Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy who sought refuge in Sierra Leone is located in this Sector. It is hoped that these elements will be repatriated as the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme in Liberia gathers momentum.

9. At the same time, the areas along the border with Liberia also remain a significant security challenge, in part because of the presence of Sierra Leonean ex-combatants who are reported to be concentrating in certain areas on the Liberian side of the border. According to reports, some of these combatants have started infiltrating back into Sierra Leone. In anticipation of this development, in October 2003 UNAMSIL and the Government of Sierra Leone launched Operation Blue Vigilance, which is aimed at gathering information on the crossing points used by illegally returning combatants and conducting joint air and land patrols. Similar patrolling in the far northern part of the country also increased, with a view to identifying reported crossing points in the Kailahun salient. Thus far, 37 sites (most of them crossable only by foot) have been identified.

10. With regard to the main diamond-producing areas, particularly at Tongo and Koidu, UNAMSIL estimates that approximately 50 per cent of all mining activities are being conducted without Government-issued licences. UNAMSIL military observers are currently engaged in an extensive survey to identify illegal sites.

IV. Implementation of benchmarks

11. As indicated in my previous reports, progress in strengthening the capacity of Sierra Leone's police and army to take over national security responsibilities from UNAMSIL constitutes a key security benchmark that guides the drawdown of the Mission. Other important benchmarks that are crucial for minimizing security threats and consolidating the peace include completion of the reintegration of former combatants, consolidation of State authority throughout the country, progress in regulating diamond mining and progress towards resolving the conflict in Liberia.

A. Strengthening the capacity of the Sierra Leone police

12. Pursuant to Security Council resolution 1436 (2002) of 24 September 2002, UNAMSIL has been focusing its efforts on assisting the Government of Sierra Leone in the recruitment and training of the Sierra Leone police, in cooperation with police from the Commonwealth. To reach this goal, UNAMSIL is also implementing joint projects with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other partners aimed at rehabilitating police stations and enhancing the capacity of the Police Training School in Hastings. However, the responsibility of rehabilitating and expanding the police infrastructure and equipping the police force rests with the Sierra Leone Government, with the support of donor countries.

13. Currently, there are 121 United Nations civilian police officers deployed to UNAMSIL. The deployment of additional mentors is under way, which will help in creating new national police divisions. The recruitment of additional United Nations trainers has also been recommended in order to improve training capacity, both at the Hastings Police Training School and at three regional training centres.

14. The training programmes aimed at strengthening the capacity of the Sierra Leone police are ongoing. During the reporting period, some 1,000 candidates passed selection tests and are now awaiting entry into the Hastings Police Training School. In the meantime, 200 new recruits graduated on 27 November 2003, bringing the total number of recruits integrated into the police force in 2003 to almost 600.

15. Apart from training new recruits, UNAMSIL also continues to assist the Sierra Leone police to enhance its policing standards, notably in the fields of human rights, police ethics, the rights of women and children and the handling of suspects. In this regard, it should be noted that there has been a remarkable reduction in cases of violence against detainees by police officers. Furthermore, the civilian police have also extended their training of the Sierra Leone police in areas of cooperation with the International Criminal Police Organization, family support, criminal intelligence and investigation, drugs, commercial crime, forensics, traffic management, airport security and diamond-mining monitoring. Fifteen police manuals have been produced by the civilian police for the Sierra Leone police to support the mentoring process.

16. The construction of additional barracks for cadets, funded by the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), is expected to be complete by March 2004. Upon their completion, the Hastings Police Training School will be in a position to accommodate 600 trainees at a time. The overall priority will remain to bring police strength to the target figure of 9,500 by end of 2005. At the same time, leadership courses for police sergeants and inspectors, supported by UNDP, have started in Makeni and Kenema. Approximately 500 officers will undergo training in these courses during 2004.

17. While the deployment of the Sierra Leone police to areas vacated by UNAMSIL is gathering pace, it hinges on the availability of infrastructure, particularly police stations and barracks. These infrastructure elements became particularly critical in the deployment of police throughout the country. So far, means of communication and transport have been provided primarily by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Also, UNDP has allocated $500,000 to the construction of barracks in the strategic districts of Kono and Kailahun. Without additional resources, the ability of the Sierra Leone police to effectively assume its security responsibilities following the withdrawal of UNAMSIL may be compromised.

B. Strengthening the capacity of the armed forces

18. With invaluable assistance from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the building of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) has continued to make good progress. The adjustment of the force from the current 14,000 to 10,500 troops is on track, and the first group of 1,000 soldiers is expected to be discharged by 31 January 2004. The Government is also making concerted efforts to improve on the current officer/soldier ratio. While the increase in officer recruitment will reduce the numerical shortfall in officer manning, further efforts will be required to improve RSLAF levels of professionalism. In 2004 some 120 junior officers will attend a staff course run by IMATT, from which the best 60 students will be selected to attend a junior staff training course in Ghana, with the

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland bearing the costs. Also, a new military academy was recently opened in Freetown, where various training programmes will be organized.

19. At the same time, the RSLAF effort to address the shortage of barracks is gathering momentum. The majority of the new barrack sites have been cleared and the building construction is under way. The project, which is being jointly funded by the Sierra Leone Government and DFID, is due to be completed by June 2004. UNAMSIL continues to provide assistance with the movement of materiel and equipment for this vital activity. However, the availability of the necessary resources will be a critical factor for the delivery of the project on time.

20. The lamentable state of the RSLAF vehicle fleet and the shortage of communication equipment have continued to seriously hinder the operations of the force, especially in the Sierra Leone-Liberia border areas, where a third of RSLAF troops are deployed. In the procurement programme for 2004, there are plans to purchase 20 new trucks. Nonetheless, considerable additional resources will be critically needed.

C. Consolidation of State authority

21. There has been further progress in the consolidation of State authority throughout the country, as more Governmental officials establish their presence at the provincial and district levels. The recent deployment to Kailahun district of government officials is a particularly welcome development given the likely revival of cross-border trade with Liberia.

22. The Ministries of Local Government and Community Development, of Health, of Education and of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs are now represented in all districts, while the Ministries of Energy and Power and of Works and Housing remain to be deployed outside provincial headquarters towns. The newly established Ministry of Youth and Sports is also deployed in most districts. All district officers now have functioning offices with communication facilities. Notwithstanding the progress made in ensuring the return of most district officials, their effective functioning remains inadequate, due mainly to lack of logistics, infrastructure and trained staff. The election of district councils in May 2004 should contribute to the further strengthening of local government.

23. Further progress has also been made in the extension of the judiciary throughout the country, including the rehabilitation and construction of courts and penitentiary facilities. The High Court began hearings in Kono district on 4 November 2003, for the first time in more than eight years. Magistrate courts also continue sitting in all 12 districts. However, effective restoration of the rule of law and speedy dispensation of justice continue to be impeded by serious resource constraints, particularly the lack of magistrates and adequately trained court officials. UNDP and other donors, in particular DFID, are providing support to address the capacity constraints of the justice sector.

24. The draft legislation on local government reform and decentralization, which is intended to pave the way for the holding of municipal, town and district elections in May 2004, has been reviewed by the Government and placed before the Parliament for adoption. The Government and donors have committed funds for voter education

and a nationwide voter registration exercise, which has been slated for February 2004. Given the long absence of local government administration in the country, an extensive voter education programme will be an essential element of the process.

25. On 5 November the National Electoral Commission forwarded a letter to the Secretary-General requesting United Nations assistance in the organization and conduct of the May 2004 elections. As it did in its request for the May 2002 general elections, the National Electoral Commission has asked for UNAMSIL's technical (public information and communications) and logistical (storage and transport of elections materials) assistance. UNAMSIL would also be expected to assist the process by deploying civilian police and other Mission elements throughout the country during the electoral preparations. In early December 2003 the Electoral Assistance Division of the Department of Political Affairs dispatched an electoral needs-assessment mission to Sierra Leone to determine the scope and requirements of such assistance.

26. While having much in common with the May 2002 general elections, the 2004 local elections will be in some respects a more complicated exercise. The main difference between the current request for assistance and the electoral assistance provided in 2002 is the lack of international electoral observation for 2004. The following tasks are thus recommended to be assumed by UNAMSIL within its existing mandate and assets: (a) logistical support in the form of transportation and storage of electoral materials and personnel, including the use of air assets to and from centres inaccessible by road; (b) the use of UNAMSIL radio and other communications facilities in the provinces; (c) the provision of security and deterrence within the framework of the UNAMSIL mandate; (d) advising and supporting the Sierra Leone police on electoral matters; (e) the establishment of a small electoral unit; and (f) support for the National Electoral Commission in implementing and disseminating civic education and public information programmes.

D. Reintegration of ex-combatants

27. The Government of Sierra Leone has maintained 31 December 2003 as the date for the completion of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme for ex-combatants. The National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration provided the following statistics concerning the delivery of reintegration opportunities to ex-combatants: of 56,751 ex-combatants registered for inclusion in the programme, 32,892 had completed their training and 15,322 were still in programmes. Of the other 8,537, the National Committee estimated the remaining caseload to be 4,500. A small number of ex-combatants are believed to be returning from Liberia or Côte d'Ivoire. Overall, the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme being near completion, the National Committee plans to complete its liquidation by March 2004. By that time about 52,000 ex-combatants will have benefited from reintegration projects. However, since social reintegration is an open-ended process, support for a wider, community-based reintegration programme is being taken up by various agencies, including the National Commission for Social Action, DFID, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UNDP and other development agencies, as well as non-governmental organizations.

28. In collaboration with UNDP, the interim National Commission on the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons continues to implement the community Arms for Development programme, supported by the Sierra Leone police and funded by the Canadian International Development Agency. The programme promotes the goal of establishing weapon-free communities in Sierra Leone and also focuses on the implications of the critical issue of cross-border movement of small arms and light weapons.

E. Restoration of Government control over diamond mining

29. During the reporting period, the Government made further progress in reasserting its control over diamond mining. The number of diamond-mining licences issued by the Sierra Leone Government to date has reached more than 1,800, compared with 900 by June 2002. Industrial-scale diamond mining has resumed in Kono district, with the Branch Energy Mining Company starting its production operation in November 2003. The Government has continued to channel funds obtained from mining licences to chiefdoms to encourage their economic recovery. Official exports of diamonds in 2003 reached $65 million at the end of October 2003.

30. Notwithstanding the progress made, illicit mining and smuggling of diamonds still persist. However, the Government has now begun taking steps to curb illegal possession and smuggling by adopting punitive measures against offenders. The National Mines and Minerals Act of 1994 has also been amended to enforce strict penalties for illicit possession and smuggling of diamonds. In addition, a core mineral policy has been reviewed by the cabinet and presented to the Parliament. UNAMSIL and other partners, in particular DFID, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the World Bank, will continue to encourage and support Government efforts to enhance the national benefits derived from the diamond industry.

V. Human rights, national reconciliation and justice

A. Monitoring and promoting human rights

31. During the reporting period, UNAMSIL continued its human rights monitoring activities, including by visiting police detention cells and prisons and observing court proceedings. UNAMSIL has also assisted with the preparation of draft legislation for the establishment of a national human rights commission, in close collaboration with civil society organizations and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, which was submitted to the Government on 29 September.

32. In the meantime, the lack of judicial action on certain major cases persists. There has been no headway made in the trials of the West Side Boys and former Revolutionary United Front members who were arrested in 2000. The same holds true for the 17 individuals arrested and detained in connection with the Wellington Barracks incident of January this year, with the exception of one detainee who has been indicted by the Special Court after being transferred to its jurisdiction.

B. Protection of children

33. During the period under review, UNAMSIL and UNICEF continued to support the Government of Sierra Leone in its efforts to strengthen the protection of vulnerable children. More than 3,000 of the registered child ex-combatants and separated children are enrolled in school. Efforts are under way to ensure access for Sierra Leonean child ex-combatants associated with the Liberian fighting forces to the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme there. With the assistance of UNAMSIL, the Government has developed guidelines for addressing the problem of street children. The Government has also prohibited child labour in the diamond mines.

34. A strategy for integrating the protection of children's activities has been developed for every component of UNAMSIL, in particular its military contingents, military observers and civilian police. Some contingents have been implementing their own plans of action for child protection, which include support activities benefiting children. The Voice of Children radio project, hosted by Radio UNAMSIL, is producing 12 radio programmes by and for children. The preparations for the handover of this initiative to local stakeholders are ongoing.

C. Gender issues

35. During the reporting period, the Mission has continued to mainstream gender and women's rights in all its activities. Although awareness on the rights of women and girls is being raised, some serious barriers still impede the successful prosecution of gender-related violence. These barriers range from the continued demand for victims to pay fees in order to obtain medical reports in alleged cases of rape to the frequent adjournment of cases. UNAMSIL urged the police and the courts to treat domestic violence as a crime and to expedite actions for their prosecution.

D. HIV/AIDS

36. During the period under review, UNAMSIL continued to actively raise awareness among its military and civilian personnel on the impact of the HIV/AIDS, pursuant to Security Council resolution 1308 (2000) of 17 July 2000. UNAMSIL, the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the United Nations Population Fund also participated in a joint survey on knowledge, attitudes, behaviour and practice in connection with HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections, gender and human rights issues among UNAMSIL peacekeepers, which was conducted in September 2003.

E. Truth and Reconciliation Commission

37. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has been granted an extension of its mandate until the end 2003. It is expected to present a report on its activities to President Kabbah in early 2004. The Commission has also continued its efforts to arrange public hearings of Special Court indictees, particularly of the former Minister of Internal Affairs, Chief Hinga Norman. It appealed the negative decision

on the matter taken by the presiding judge of the Trial Chamber, Judge Bankole Thompson. Consequently, the President of the Special Court, Judge Geoffrey Robertson, overturned the negative ruling and rendered a decision that would allow Hinga Norman to testify in a sworn affidavit before the Commission. The decision also enables the indictees to be interviewed by Commissioners of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in confidential sessions.

F. Special Court

38. During the reporting period, the Special Court continued with pre-trial hearings for the nine individuals indicted for war crimes. The Prosecutor has submitted motions seeking to join the existing cases into two combined indictments, namely, of the Revolutionary United Front/Armed Forces Revolutionary Council grouping and the CDF grouping. The motion in this regard was heard in the first week of December. Also, the Appeals Chamber sat from 31 October to 6 November to hear appeals of some of the indictments. Former Liberian President Charles Taylor has challenged the Court on the grounds of "sovereign immunity" and extraterritoriality. Others whose appeals were heard included Hinga Norman, Augustine Gbao, Morris Kallon and Moinina Fofana. They have challenged the constitutionality of the Court, upholding the legitimacy of the amnesty granted them under the Lomé Peace Agreement.

39. Meanwhile, the construction of the Court building has begun and is expected to be completed by March 2004. However, this does not prevent the Trial Chamber from commencing trials before then at the temporary accommodation. UNAMSIL has continued to provide essential security as well as logistical support to the Court on a cost-reimbursable basis. At present two platoons of UNAMSIL troops are stationed at the Court's premises and provide security, in collaboration with the Sierra Leone police and RSLAF. At the same time, Radio UNAMSIL continues to make airtime available to the Court on a weekly basis.

VI. Humanitarian issues

40. In the last six months there have been no significant influxes of refugees into Sierra Leone from Liberia, and the number of Liberians seeking refuge in Sierra Leone has remained relatively unchanged, at about 67,000. A total of 55,600 of them are accommodated in eight camps, and a further 8,300 are in urban areas, while 3,100 remain in the border regions. Since the stabilization of the situation in Liberia, a very small number of refugees have returned home. In the meantime, contingency arrangements to face a possible influx of returnees into Sierra Leone are in place.

41. The repatriation of the 40,000 Sierra Leonean refugees who continue to reside in the subregion recommenced at the end of October with flights from Abidjan and Ghana, and flights from other countries within the West African subregion will start in December 2003. Road repatriation from Guinea recommenced in November 2003, and repatriation operations through Kailahun will begin in December. It is hoped that up to 5,000 Sierra Leoneans will return before the end of 2003. Repatriation operations from Guinea and Liberia will continue throughout the first six months of 2004.

42. The United Nations Transitional Appeal for Relief and Recovery in Sierra Leone in 2004 was launched in Dublin on 19 November 2003. It comprises three joint programmes aimed at meeting both emergency relief needs and immediate recovery requirements in 2004: supporting Liberian refugees and host communities; voluntary repatriation of Sierra Leoneans; and community-based recovery, focusing only on areas yet to benefit from current recovery efforts. A total of $62 million to meet these objectives will be required.

VII. Recovery and development efforts

43. During the period under review, the National Recovery Committee held meetings in Kenema, Kono and Bonthe districts; all districts except Tonkolili have now been reviewed. The meetings have helped prioritize needs, channel assistance and bring government action to the district level, thus paving the way towards decentralization. Regular assessments of progress on the benchmarks agreed at the November 2002 Consultative Group meeting are also undertaken in meetings of the Development Partnership Committee, chaired by the Vice-President. Recent meetings of the Committee have discussed the national security framework, the justice sector, education, non-governmental organization policy and energy and power. These meetings have helped to focus attention on longer-term structural problems and are proving to be a useful mechanism to prepare for the post-UNAMSIL transition.

44. Sierra Leone's economic performance maintained the positive trend noted in previous reports. Available data for the first half of 2003 indicate that the real gross domestic product programme target of 6.5 per cent is likely to be achieved. The momentum for output growth is coming largely from a broad recovery in agricultural output, growth in diamond production, a modest increase in manufacturing output and expansion in construction activities, in both the public and the private sectors. In the agricultural sector, rice output reached 78 per cent of its pre-war levels, resulting from a 47 per cent increase in area planted in rice combined with an aggressive seed distribution programme that saw 144,000 farmers receive 5,772 tons of seed rice. Other food crops, such as cassava, sweet potatoes and groundnuts, also experienced strong recovery in 2003. At the same time, officially recorded diamond output almost doubled to 251,300 carats, from 136,400 carats in the first half of 2002. Arrangements for and negotiations on the resumption of the production of other key minerals, such as bauxite, rutile and kimberlite are expected to boost mineral exports once production commences.

45. However, some indicators point to possible macroeconomic instability. The downward trend in domestic prices witnessed in 2002 was reversed in 2003. Year-on-year inflation rose to 6.5 per cent in June 2003, compared with negative inflation of 2.9 per cent in June 2002. This was due to a combination of rising oil prices, depreciation of the national currency and other domestic factors, which resulted in most of the components of the price index rising appreciably. For example, the food index, which accounts for 54 per cent of the basket, rose by 5 per cent. Indices for expendable goods and services, personal transport and medicine and medical care rose by 33 percent, 44 per cent and 24 per cent respectively. Government finances nevertheless improved significantly from January to June 2003. Revenue collection from customs and excise duties, income tax and excise duties on petroleum products exceeded their half-yearly targets, due largely to improvements in administration,

coupled with improvements in economic performance. Despite the improved domestic revenue performance and strong external financial support (evidenced by an inflow of 94,2 billion leones) in the form of programme support, heavily indebted poor country debt relief and balance-of-payments support, overruns on development outlays, higher security-related expenditures and expenditures to support disarmament, demobilization and reintegration have put pressure on the budget, resulting in a primary deficit of 2.3 per cent of gross domestic product, compared with 2.1 per cent in the first half of 2002. This has led to greater recourse to domestic financing of the budget deficit.

46. The first half of 2003 was marked by a relaxation of monetary policy. Broad money rose by 32.7 per cent, reflecting higher deficit financing as well as a rapid expansion of credit to public enterprises and the private sector. Prospects for the rest of the year indicate that the continuing depreciation of the leone coupled with the rapid expansion of money supply, and their resulting impact on domestic prices, pose a serious challenge to macroeconomic stability in Sierra Leone and need to be addressed immediately. This calls for stronger domestic revenue-collection efforts and more stringent expenditure-control measures.

VIII. Cooperation and coordination with other peacekeeping operations

47. As mandated by the Security Council, UNAMSIL has continued to support the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), as well as maintaining contacts with other United Nations missions in the subregion. Following the inauguration of UNMIL on 1 October, UNAMSIL supported the deployment of the Bangladeshi battalion to Liberia. It has dispatched a number of military observers on temporary attachment to UNMIL and recently completed two pre-deployment training programmes for UNMIL force headquarters staff. Also, there has been an exchange of operational information between UNAMSIL and UNMIL on a regular basis. Freetown continues to serve as a transit point for some personnel and reconnaissance teams en route to and from Liberia. In the same vein, professionals from substantive and administrative sections of UNAMSIL continue to assist UNMIL by sharing lessons learned and/or through temporary assignment to it.

48. A high-level meeting of the United Nations missions in West Africa was held in Freetown, Sierra Leone on 14 November, bringing together the heads of the United Nations peacekeeping and political missions and force commanders in West Africa. The meeting reviewed the general situation in West Africa as well as the specific conditions prevailing in Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau. The heads of Mission agreed to set up a mechanism to facilitate a free flow of information between missions, as well as, based on the capacity of the respective Missions, operational coordination, including border patrols controlling the cross-border flow of persons and goods, in cooperation with the host national security forces. They also agreed to hold regular consultations at the level of heads and force commanders of missions. The next such meeting is planned to be held in Dakar in February 2004.

IX. Observations and recommendations

49. The stable security situation in Sierra Leone has continued to facilitate the consolidation of peace and the implementation of the benchmarks set by the Security Council in resolution 1436 (2002). Progress has also been made in the gradual handover of responsibility for the national security of Sierra Leone to the Sierra Leone police and RSLAF. The various training programmes aimed at enhancing the capacity of the security sector and measures taken to improve infrastructure and respond to logistics needs are encouraging. However, additional resources are urgently required to continue enhancing the capacity of the security sector. Both RSLAF and the Sierra Leone police need to quickly improve their overall capability and project a credible deterrence profile.

50. In this context, before proceeding to the last stages of the UNAMSIL drawdown, it would be important to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the security situation and the progress made in implementation of the benchmarks in order to determine whether any adjustments to the withdrawal plan are required. It is my intention to present recommendations to the Security Council, based on the results of such an assessment, in my next report to the Council, in March 2004.

51. I would like to appeal to donors to provide generous assistance to the Government in its efforts to meet the logistics and infrastructure needs of the Sierra Leone security sector. As some donors are for various reasons unable to fund security-related projects, it is proposed that they may wish to consider arrangements whereby the Sierra Leone Government itself would make additional provision from its budget to meet the basic security sector expenditures, while donors would offer supplementary budgetary resources, on an exceptional basis, for critical social objectives the attainment of which might otherwise be affected by the financial constraints.

52. The ongoing efforts to stabilize Liberia are already beginning to have a positive impact on the situation in the whole of the Mano River region. The recent visit of the Chairman of the National Transitional Government of Liberia, Gyude Bryant, to the neighbouring countries, aimed at improving bilateral relations with them, is highly commendable. Leaders of the subregion are therefore encouraged to build on this development and to undertake measures aimed at enhancing dialogue among the Mano River Union States in order to revitalize the Union in promoting subregional security and stability.

53. The recent meeting in Freetown of the heads and force commanders of the United Nations peacekeeping and political missions in West Africa is an important new development. That forum will provide a framework for addressing the pressing issues affecting the subregion, in particular its cross-border problems. In this regard, UNAMSIL deserves to be commended for hosting the meeting and for its continued support for other missions in the subregion, especially UNMIL.

54. I remain concerned, however, about the numbers of foreign combatants in Liberia and the Liberian internees who still remain in Sierra Leone. As the peace process in Liberia takes hold, it is expected that the repatriation of these combatants to their respective countries and their expeditious reintegration into civilian life will become possible.

55. Since my last report, the Sierra Leone Government's efforts to assert its control over diamond mining have continued to yield good results. In particular, the steps taken to curb illicit mining and smuggling have generated considerable additional revenue from the sector. Notwithstanding this positive development, I reiterate my earlier call for the implementation of further measures aimed at ensuring the Government's full control over the diamond-mining sector. In this regard, the role of USAID and DFID in supporting a comprehensive solution to the problems of this vital economic sector is most welcome.

56. On 28 November 2003, I sent a letter to the President of the Security Council (S/2003/1142) in which I informed him of my intention to appoint Daudi Ngelautwa Mwakawago (United Republic of Tanzania) as my new Special Representative for Sierra Leone. Mr. Mwakawago will replace Oluyemi Adeniji, who was appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nigeria. Mr. Mwakawago is expected to assume his duties in Sierra Leone in early January 2004.

57. In conclusion, I wish to express my deep appreciation to the Security Council and to troop- and police-contributing countries, as well as to the Economic Community of West African States and donor countries, for their continued support for peace consolidation in Sierra Leone. I am also grateful to all UNAMSIL military and civilian personnel, other United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations for their important contribution to the continued progress in the peace consolidation process in Sierra Leone.

Annex

United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone: contributions as at 15 December 2003

Country	*Military observers*	*Staff officers*	*Troops*	*Sector headquarters staff*	*Total*
Bangladesh	15	17	1 406	65	1 503
Bolivia	6				6
Canada	5				5
China	6				6
Croatia	10				10
Czech Republic	5				5
Denmark	2				2
Egypt	10				10
Gambia	15				15
Germany			16		16
Ghana	7	9	777		793
Guinea	12	1			13
Indonesia	10				10
Jordan	10	4	119		133
Kenya	12	13	989		1 014
Kyrgyzstan	2				2
Malaysia	10				10
Mali	5				5
Nepal	10	4	800		814
New Zealand	2				2
Nigeria	9	14	1 543	61	1 627
Pakistan	15	16	3 792	42	3 865
Russian Federation	13	4	110		127
Slovakia	2				2
Sweden	3				3
United Republic of Tanzania	12				12
Thailand	5				5
Ukraine	5	4	636		645
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	15	8			23
Uruguay	11				11
Zambia	9	5	820		834
Total	**253**	**99**	**11 008**	**168**	**11 528**

(Footnotes on following page)

(Footnotes to annex)

Notes: ***Authorized military strength***: 13,000 (not including up to 260 military observers).

Force Commander/Chief Military Observer: Pakistan; Acting Deputy Force Commander: United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Civilian Police: Bangladesh: 2; Canada: 9; Gambia: 2; Ghana: 8; India: 7; Jordan: 7; Kenya: 8; Malawi: 4; Mauritius: 2; Malaysia: 5; Namibia: 2; Nepal: 11; Nigeria: 6; Norway: 3; Russian Federation: 3; Senegal: 7; Sri Lanka: 4; Sweden: 4; Turkey: 6; United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland: 10; United States of America: 1; Zambia: 10; Zimbabwe: 10 (Total: 131).

Map No. 4132 Rev. 25 UNITED NATIONS
December 2003

Department of Public Information
Cartographic Section